

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 21, 2005 presents rejections of claims 1, 4-6, 12, 14-16 and 22. The Office Action also states that claims 2, 3, 7-11 and 13-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Referring first to claims 14, 15, 16 and 22, it is to be noted that the Office Action includes these claims among those that are identified as containing allowable subject matter, but also presents rejections of these claims on the basis of prior art. Each of these claims depends from claim 13 (either directly or indirectly), which was not rejected on the basis of prior art, and was also identified as containing allowable subject matter. Since claims 14-16 and 22 depend from an allowable claim that has not been rejected on the basis of prior art, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable for the same reasons that claim 13 is allowable. Accordingly, it is believed that the rejection of claims 14-16 and 22 appearing in the Office Action is an inadvertent error. If all pending claims are not allowed in response to this Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to clarify the status of claims 14-16 and 22 in his next communication.

Pursuant to the indication of allowable subject matter, claim 1 has been cancelled, and each of claims 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 4, 5, 6 and 12 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 2.


In the sentence following the caption "Allowable Subject Matter", the Office Action states that the claims that were objected to would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, "and subject to the Examiner specific request to merge (i.e. combine) the all [sic] limitations of Claims 2-3, and 7-11 with base independent claim 1 to make the application allowable." The

Examiner's position, e.g. in the nature of a rejection, is submitted to be in order, so that Applicant can respond accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

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